



JIM MARTIN  
WEST COAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
THE RECREATIONAL FISHING ALLIANCE  
P.O. Box 2420  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Sunday, April 13, 2008

Richard Rogers, President  
John Carlson, Executive Director  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento CA 95814-2090

Dear President Rogers and fellow Commissioners,

The Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) is a national 501(c)(4) non-profit grassroots political action organization whose mission is to safeguard the rights of salt water anglers, protect marine, boat, and tackle industry jobs, and insure the long-term sustainability of our nation's marine fisheries.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternative arrays of marine protected areas pursuant to the implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act in north-central California. Our first order of business is to thank all of the regional stakeholders for their hard work and sacrifice to date.

We are particularly pleased with the balance of fishing representatives on the regional stakeholder group, and respect their expertise across a broad range of fisheries, habitats and interest groups. Once again, RFA members served on this panel as they did in the south-central region, bringing their local knowledge and expertise to the development of a network of MPAs in California. Bill Bernard, from Lodi, is a member of the Abalone Advisory Group and showed his ability when he won First Place in the abalone division of RFA's Randy Fry Tournament last year. Ken Jones, who joined the RFA-NorCal Chapter board, has brought a new perspective to the MLPA process with his knowledge of shore angling. Tom Mattusch, skipper of the *Hulicat*, spent many hours working on the "special closures" proposals that may limit public access to protect shorebirds and marine mammals.

Highlights of our concerns going into this phase of the MLPA include our north coast abalone resource, our public shore-based access points along the north coast, and the economic viability of our ports and harbors in the region. Recreational fishing is a huge part of the north coast economy and we need to balance the requirements of the statute with the importance of our outdoor heritage and traditions. Our members have communicated their strong interest in keeping Salt Point State Park open as a shore based diving access point. We strongly feel that the new Stornetta Ranch public access remain open to abalone diving and fishing, since \$1 million from the Sportfish Restoration Act Fund – an excise tax paid by anglers on tackle and fishing gear – paid for this conservation land purchase. The port of Point Arena is an important cultural and

historical resource and it's important to many recreational anglers and divers to keep that pier open and functioning in the future. We ask that Point Arena be given consideration for the fragility of its infrastructure. We hope you will keep these considerations in mind as you deliberate upon the final regulations.

We have two recommendations that apply to all of the proposals before you.

- #1. Special Closures: These regulations appear to be a mighty stretch from the original intent and the letter of the MLPA statute. The regulations apply to wildlife resources already protected fully by state and federal laws. These wildlife resources are located above the mean high tide mark and are beyond the scope of the Act. We urge you to remove all references to these special closures in all of the MLPA alternatives.
- #2. State Marine Parks: California's Department of Parks & Recreation has played an odd role in the regional stakeholder group, as stakeholders, as regulators and as enforcement authority. The RFA wrote to the Department about their policy on marine reserves located at important public access sites, but we received no reply, and cannot find any reference in the State Parks and Recreation Commission's minutes reflecting any discussion about MLPA policy where the public users of the state park system could have weighed in with comment. Several of the alternatives contain MPAs designated as proposed "State Marine Parks" and we ask that these be designated as State Marine Conservation Areas with the same regulations. This would streamline the regulatory authority of the MLPA and remove a quirk in the original legislation that grants the State Parks and Recreation Commission a say in fishing regulations. This change would place sole authority for fishing regulations in the proposed MPAs under the Fish and Game Commission, without altering the goals, objectives or regulations for these MPAs.

Our representatives on the North Coast Regional Stakeholder Groups were unanimous in their support of alternative 2 XA for the north-central region. The Recreational Fishing Alliance asks you to give strong consideration for the final adoption of this alternative later this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Martin  
West Coast Regional Director  
The Recreational Fishing Alliance

CC:  
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force  
MLPA Initiative Team  
Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman  
Fort Bragg City Council  
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors